

DEKALB
CHURCH
HISTORY
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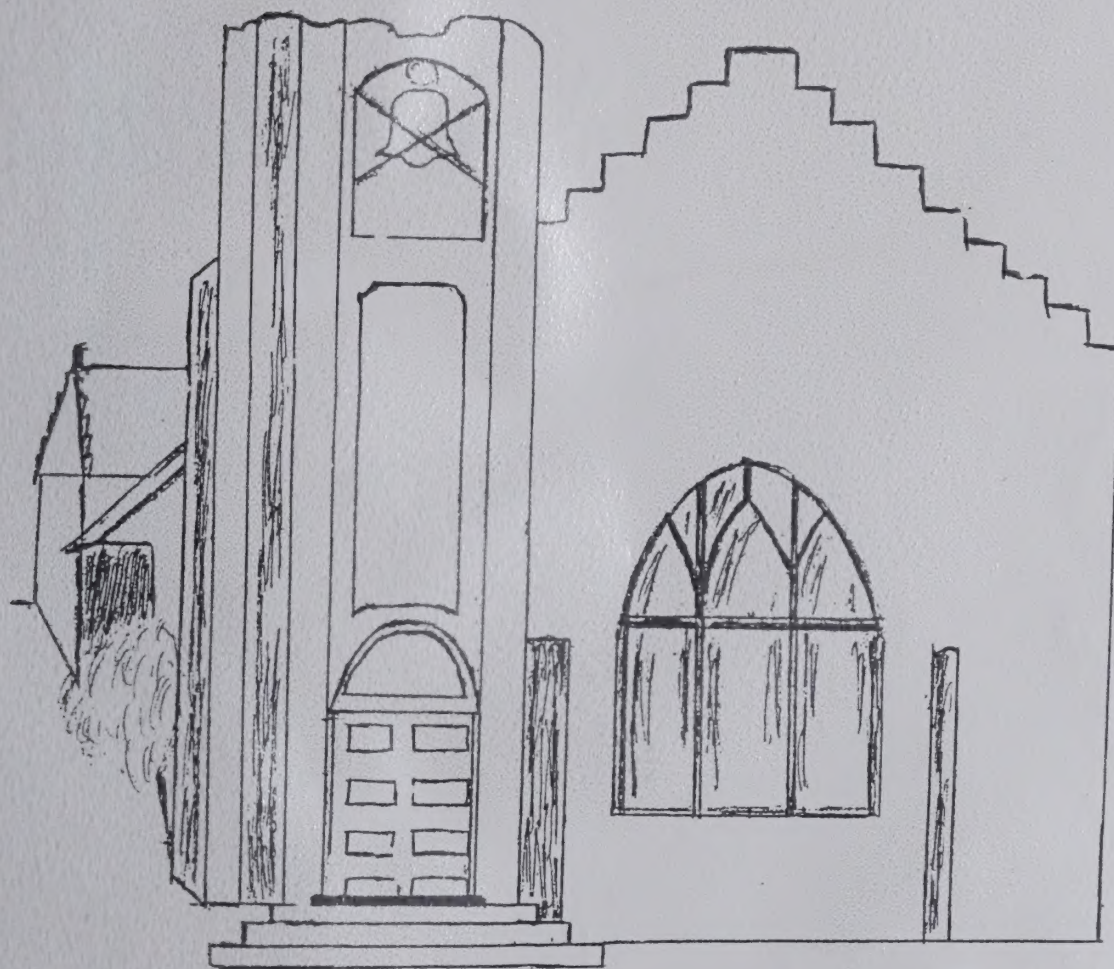
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History Of

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Altona Church

Founded July 27, 1894



July 26, 1987

A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE ALTONA METHODIST CHURCH

Founded July 27, 1894

-by E. J. Gilford
(updated by Mrs. Dora Miller)

As the pioneers of the early Methodist Protestant Church began moving westward from Baltimore, they brought with them the love of the churches of their choice. Thus, in an early day what was known as the Hopewell Methodist Protestant Church was built one and one half miles south of Altona. It is said that this was the second church built in the county. Rev. H. Stackhouse served the Hopewell church from 1891-93. In 1893, Rev. E. J. Scott became the minister and on "July 27th, 1894, the membership of the Hopewell Church transferred to the Altona Church and the Butler Center Church, E. J. Scott, Pastor." This is a quote of a notation Rev. Scott wrote in the Membership Book kept at the Mitchell Street Methodist Church in Kendallville.

The Altona people then moved the old church to Altona and rebuilt it, and the Butler Center people built the brick church in Butler Center which was closed in 1962.

These two churches were connected with the Kendallville Circuit until August, 1898. At the Annual Conference held at Liberty Center, Wells County in August 1898, Altona and Butler Center were detached from the Kendallville Circuit and Rehobeth was detached from the St. Joe Circuit. Therefore, Rehobeth was added to Butler Center and Altona constituting the Altona Circuit.

The Altona membership met with a great loss on February 26, 1907, when their church burned, but out of the ruins of the old came the fine cement block church that has stood as a monument to the heroic efforts of the pastor and people and blessed by the Lord. Immediately after the fire, the consecrated pastor, Rev. P. W. Boxell, with his faithful members began to build a new church structure. On May 10, 1907, Rev. Boxell made the first cement block for the church and the new structure was dedicated May 31, 1908.

Upon extensive research both in the DeKalb County Courthouse at Auburn and the Noble County Courthouse at Albion, we do not find any record of the trustees of the Altona Church when it was organized in 1894, but we did find the Parsonage Trustees for 1894-95 who were Charles A. Shaffer, Martha Embry, H. E. Gettle, O. E. Clark, G. S. Henry and Ephrim Olinger. Nor did we find the trustees who rebuilt the church after the fire in 1907. However, we did find the trustees of the Parsonage in 1900 when C. W. Evans was pastor. They were John Magbert, George Probst, Benjamin Hawver and G. A. Adams. We also found the parsonage trustees in 1907 were John Maggert, Jonas Veasey and George Adams.

We further found in a newspaper account names of those who contributed their time and efforts in the rebuilding of the church in 1907. These were Oliver Weller, Charles Weller, Frank Yarde, John Maggert, Edward Kelham, James Kelham, Newton DePew, Sr., John Barber and others.

It is unfortunate that the names of others who put in many hours of thought, prayer and services were not recorded, but even though we do not know them by name, God knows!

The following ministers help make up the history of the Altona Methodist Church:

1894-1896	E. J. Scott	1906-1908	P. W. Boxell
1896	A. O. Lucas	1908-1910	W. S. Harper
1896-1898	W. H. Green	1910-1911	W. S. Cooms
1898 6 mo.	A. H. McClain	1911-1914	A. L. Wooton
1899-1900	T. E. Lamcaster	1914-1915	E. L. Myers
1900-1902	C. W. Evans	1915-1916	J. W. Anderson
1902-1903	F. M. Hussey	1916-1919	C. C. Farmer
1903-1904	P. B. Leach		
1904-1906	C. A. Frakes		

Between the end of the first World War and 1925, we have J. H. Ramsey, J. R. Elson, O. S.

Rardin, A. A. Ireland and V. B. Ratcliff. The average pastorate was one to three years.

1925-1931 (or these approximate dates to the best obtainable information) the church was closed. At the Annual Conference in August, 1931, Altona was dropped from the other two churches and became an independent church. Butler Center and Rehobeth churches were formed into a circuit known as Garrett circuit. We will follow with the Altona Church pastors.

1931-32	W. L. Heitz	1941-42	James D. Bell	1955-56	Carl Blackendorf
1932-33	G. M. McKinley	1942-44	O. B. Gray	1956-57	Eugene Stolte
1933-34	Mrs. C. H. Simons	1944-46	No pastor	1957-60	Jim M. Fritz
1934-35	P. W. Boxell	1946-47	T. Gottschalk	1960-62	Rev. Stafford
1935-38	Wm. D. Koehlien	1947-48	Chas. Joder	1962-63	Ed. Biehld
1938-40	A. L. Wooton	1948-51	E. J. Gilford	1963-64	Jim M. Fritz
1940-41	Earl Buskirk	1951-55	James Lantz	1964-66	Don Klopfenstein

